

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Initially, Applicants would like to express appreciation to the Examiner for the detailed Official Action provided, for the acknowledgment of Applicants' Information Disclosure Statement by return of the Form PTO-1449, and for the acknowledgment of Applicants' Claim for Priority and receipt of the certified copy of the priority document in the Official Action. However, Applicants note that the Examiner has not acknowledged that the drawings are acceptable, and it is requested that the Examiner indicate the acceptability of the drawings in the next Official Action.

Applicants also acknowledge with appreciation the indication that claims 1-7, 9 and 10 contain allowable subject matter on Page 3 of the Official Action.

Upon entry of the above amendments claims 1-7, 9 and 10 will have been amended, and claim 8 will have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer to the subject matter contained therein. Claims 1-7, 9 and 10 are currently pending. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the outstanding rejections, and allowance of all the claims pending in the present application.

In the Official Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-10 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, for being indefinite. More particularly, the Examiner asserts that certain claim recitations lack proper antecedent basis. Without acquiescing to the propriety of the Examiner's rejection, Applicants have amended claims 1-7, 9 and 10, where appropriate, in order to address the Examiner's concerns.

Accordingly, the rejection of claims 1-10 under 35 U.S.C. § 112 is believed to be moot and should be withdrawn.

In the Official Action, the Examiner rejected claim 8 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by JP 2001-259743

Without acquiescing to the propriety of the Examiner's rejection, Applicants have canceled claim 8 solely in order to expedite prosecution of the present Application. Thus, Applicants submit that the Examiner's rejection of this claim is moot; therefore, it is not necessary to discuss the appropriateness of the rejection.

Further, Applicants expressly reserve the right to submit claims of a related scope in another application. Thus, the cancellation of claim 8 is without prejudice. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request an early indication of the allowance of all of the pending claims.

In view of the amendments and remarks herein, Applicants submit that all pending claims have been amended, where appropriate, in order to overcome the Examiner's rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Thus, as indicated in the Official Action, Applicants submit that claims 1-7, 9 and 10 are in condition for allowance.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that all pending claims in the present application are clearly patentable over the references cited by the Examiner, either alone or in combination, and an indication to such effect is respectfully requested, in due course.

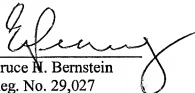
SUMMARY

Applicants submit that the present application is in condition for allowance, and respectfully requests an indication to that effect. Applicants have amended the claims, where appropriate, in order to overcome the Examiner's rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. § 112. Accordingly, reconsideration of the outstanding Official Action and allowance of the present application and all the claims therein are respectfully requested and is now believed to be appropriate.

Applicants note that this amendment is being made to advance prosecution of the application to allowance and should not be considered as surrendering equivalents of the territory between the claims prior to the present amendment and the amended claims. Further, no acquiescence as to the propriety of the Examiner's rejection is made by the present amendment. All other amendments to the claims which have been made in this amendment, and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon the prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto.

Should the Examiner have any questions, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,
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